Nomen: HW Entertainment and Leisure – Gladiators and Bath Houses

Spatium:

Gladiators (modified from Mr. Donn, a Roman history scholar)

The Romans loved bloody sports. The Romans referred to these sports or contests as the games. Games were held in the sports stadiums that were built all over the Roman Empire.

At some events, men would fight fierce animals like lions and alligators. The more interesting and exotic these animals were to the ancient Romans, the more they liked the contest. Before combat, the animals were treated very badly. They were beaten and starved so they would be especially mean. Usually, the men won. But sometimes the animals won, and the Romans found that especially exciting.  But these fighters were not the famous gladiators.

The gladiators fought other gladiators. The fights were not like you see in the movies. In ancient Rome, the gladiator battle was not always or even often to the death.  This does not mean a gladiator’s life was easy. Their life was not easy at all. Some people chose to become gladiators. Others were slaves, forced into the sport, and usually found themselves the loser. Most gladiators were a little chubby, although they were in excellent condition. They wanted extra body weight to help protect themselves when they were stabbed or hit. They were stabbed and hit a lot. But gladiators who won most of their matches were famous. The crowds would cheer when they entered the arena.

As time went on, the bloody fights became more organized. Gladiators were pitted against other gladiators their own size, who had won a similar number of battles. This converted the sport into competitions. There were a few women who were gladiators, and they fought other women. Referees were added to monitor the fight. A referee could stop the fight at any time, and usually did when one gladiator was injured. Sometimes, fights went on for quite a while. If the crowd got bored, the referee might call the fight a drawn. If the emperor was in attendance, he might ask the crowd for a decision on whether or not to kill the loser, but people had their favorites. They wanted their gladiators alive, so they could fight again another day.

After reading the passages, determine whether the statements are true or false. Circle your response.

1. People never chose to become gladiators. TRUE FALSE
2. Gladiators always died at the end of a fight. TRUE FALSE
3. Gladiators wanted to have extra body fat to help protect them. TRUE FALSE
4. Animals were treated well before combat. TRUE FALSE
5. The emperor sometimes decided whether a gladiator lived. TRUE FALSE

The Roman Baths (modified from Mr. Donn)

Bathing was very important to the ancient Romans.  Romans would visit the public baths every day, even holy and feast days.  These were not co-ed.  Each public bathhouse either had separate pools for men and women or had different hours for men and women.

The bathhouse was more than just a place to wash.  It was similar to what shopping malls are today.  It was a place to meet friends, a place where you could get something to eat, a place to workout, even a place to read the day's news.  You could even get your hair cut and styled.  Inside the bathhouse were both hot and cold pools, saunas, workout rooms, reading rooms, restaurants and hair salons.  And of course there were many slaves to pamper you.

Unlike our shopping malls today, you had to pay to enter the public bath.  Children and slaves were not supposed to enter (of course if you had enough money or power you could bring your personal slaves with you).  The bathhouse was a very important part of every Roman's day.

1. Roman baths were co-ed (for both men and women). TRUE FALSE
2. You could only bathe at the bath houses. TRUE FALSE
3. Bath houses were free. TRUE FALSE
4. Romans went to the bath houses everyday. TRUE FALSE

Bath Houses (modified from “History for Kids”)

**Cultural Significance**: Romans were obsessed with bathing as they believed that bathing together with massage, exercise and eating was an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Romans socialized with each other in these baths. Politicians met in baths, discussed politics and tried to persuade others to support their cause. These bathing houses were the closest thing to the modern community centers.

Whenever a rich or noble Roman wanted to gain public favor he would announce to bear the cost of one day’s admission to bathing house for public. Politicians used this method close to elections to gain public support. Emperors built public baths to gain popularity with public and create a monument of their generosity. The bathing houses were intricately decorated with mosaics and statues of Roman gods.

1. An important aspect of the bath houses was socializing. TRUE FALSE
2. Politicians would promote themselves at the bathhouses. TRUE FALSE
3. The bath houses were plain and undecorated. TRUE FALSE